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ABSTRACT

Emphasizing the need for a Federal-Indian partnership which promotes Indian self-help and Indian respect this speech proposes: strengthened Federal leadership via a National Council on Indian Opportunity; Indian involvement in the determination of Indian problems and needs; enrollment of all Indian Children in a preschool program by 1971; funds to make the Head Start Program available to 10,000 Indian children; establishment of kindergartens for 4,500 Indian children by September of 1969; appropriations of $5.5 million for hiring Federal Indian school teachers and $3 million for 1969 college scholarship grants; an increase of 10% in the Indian health program; a 50% increase in the Indian Vocational Training Program; an amendment to the Federal Highway Act increasing authorization for Indian road construction to $30 million annually; an annual increase of 1,000 units in Indian home construction; increases in appropriations for broad home improvements, safe water and sanitary facilities, and community action programs; enactment of the Indian Bill of Rights, the Alaska Native Claims Act, and the Indian Resources Development Act. (JC)

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Special Issue -

President Johnson Presents Indian Message To Congress

THE FORGOTTEN AMERICAN

The President's Message to the Congress on Goals and Programs for the American Indian. March 6, 1968

To the Congress of the United States:

Mississippi and Utah—the Potomac and the Chattahoochee—Appalachia and Shenandoah . . . The words of the Indian have become our words—the names of our states and streams and landmarks.

His myths and his heroes enrich our literature.

His lore colors our art and our language.

For two centuries, the American Indian has been a symbol of the drama and excitement of the earliest America.

But for two centuries, he has been an alien in his own land.

Relations between the United States Government and the tribes were originally in the hands of the War Department. Until 1871, the United States treated the Indian tribes as foreign nations.

It has been only 44 years since the United States affirmed the

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Indian's citizenship: the full political equality essential for human dignity in a democratic society.

It has been only 22 years since Congress enacted the Indian Claims Act, to acknowledge the Nation's debt to the first Americans for their land.

But political equality and compensation for ancestral lands are not enough. The American Indian deserves a chance to develop his talents and share fully in the future of our Nation.

There are about 600,000 Indians in America today. Some 400,000 live on or near reservations in 25 States. The remaining 200,000 have moved to our cities and towns. The most striking fact about the American Indians today is their tragic plight:

—Fifty thousand Indian families live in unsanitary, dilapidated dwellings: many in huts, shanties, even abandoned automobiles.

—The unemployment rate among Indians is nearly 40 percent—more than ten times the national average.

—Fifty percent of Indian schoolchildren—double the national average—drop out before completing high school.

—Indian literacy rates are among the lowest in the Nation; the rates of sickness and poverty are among the highest.

—Thousands of Indians who have migrated into the cities find themselves untrained for jobs and unprepared for urban life.

—The average age of death of an American Indian today is 44 years; for all other Americans, it is 65.

The American Indian, once proud and free, is torn now between white and tribal values; between the politics and language of the white man and his own historic culture. His problems, sharpened by years of defeat and exploitation, neglect and inadequate effort, will take many years to overcome.

But recent landmark laws—the Economic Opportunity Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Manpower Development and Training Act—have given us an opportunity to deal with the persistent problems of the American Indian. The time has come to focus our efforts on the plight of the American Indian through these and the other laws passed in the last few years.

No enlightened Nation, no responsible government, no progressive people can sit idly by and permit this shocking situation to continue.

I propose a new goal for our Indian programs: A goal that ends the old debate about "termination" of Indian programs and stresses self-determination; a goal that erases old attitudes of paternalism and promotes partnership self-help.

Our goal must be:

—A standard of living for the Indians equal to that of the country as a whole.

—Freedom of Choice: An opportunity to remain in their homelands, if they choose, without surrendering their dignity; an opportunity to move to the towns and cities of America, if they choose, equipped with the skills to live in equality and dignity.

—Full participation in the life of modern America, with a full share of economic opportunity and social justice.

"Live in equality and dignity. . ." (Los Angeles, Calif.)

I propose, in short, a policy of maximum choice for the American Indian: a policy expressed in programs of self-help, self-development, self-determination.

To start toward our goal in Fiscal 1969, I recommend that the Congress appropriate one-half a billion dollars for programs targeted at the American Indian—about 10 percent more than Fiscal 1968.

Strengthened Federal Leadership

In the past four years, with the advent of major new programs, several agencies have undertaken independent efforts to help the American Indian. Too often, there has been too little coordination between agencies; and no clear, unified policy which applied to all.

To launch an undivided, Government-wide effort in this area, I am today issuing an Executive Order to establish a National Council on Indian Opportunity.

The Chairman of the Council will be the Vice President who will bring the problems of the Indians to the highest levels of Government. The Council will include a cross section of Indian leaders, and high government officials who have programs in this field:

—The Secretary of the Interior, who has primary responsibility for Indian Affairs.

—The Secretary of Agriculture, whose programs affect thousands of Indians.

—The Secretary of Commerce, who can help promote economic

development of Indian lands.

—The Secretary of Labor, whose manpower programs can train more Indians for more useful employment.

—The Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, who can help Indian communities with two of their most pressing needs—health and education.

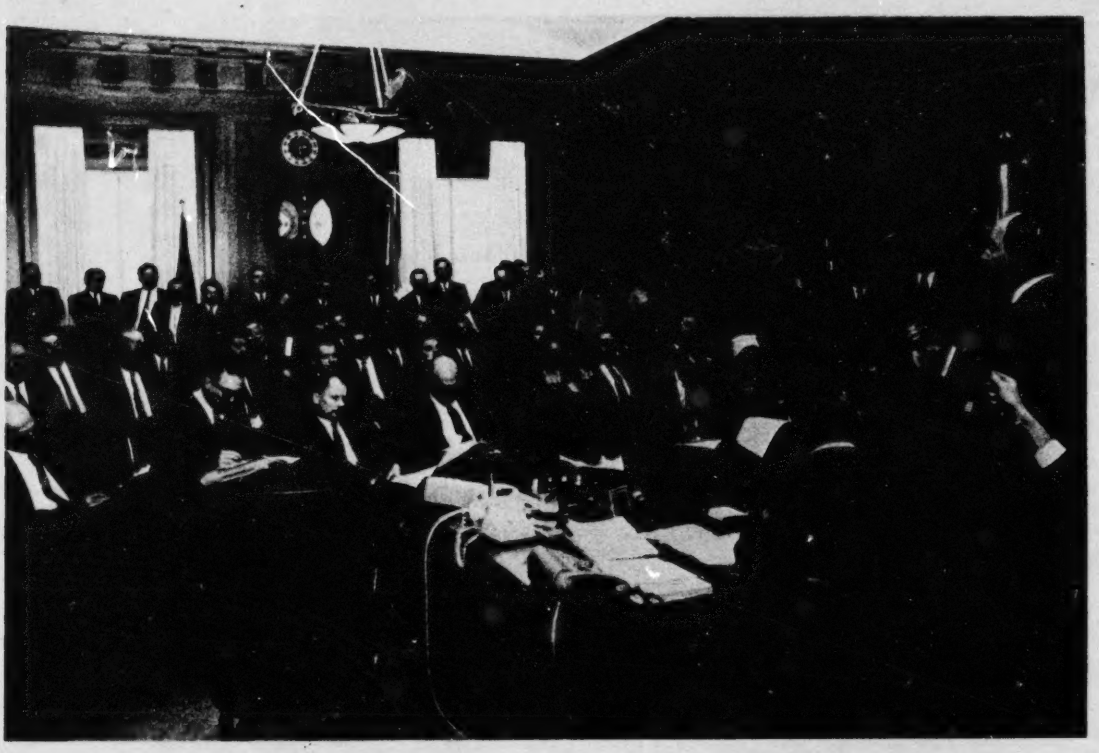
—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, who can bring better housing to Indian lands.

—The Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, whose programs are already operating in several Indian communities.

The Council will review Federal programs for Indians, make broad policy recommendations, and ensure that programs reflect the needs and desires of the Indian people. Most important, I have asked the Vice President, as Chairman of the Council, to make certain that the American Indian shares fully in all our federal programs.

Self-Help and Self-Determination

The greatest hope for Indian progress lies in the emergence of Indian



Vice President Hubert L. Humphrey reiterates the determination of President Johnson to bring about wholesale improvement in Indian affairs at a press briefing in Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall's office. This briefing followed release of the Presidential message. Attending the briefing were tribal officials, members of the press, and Bureau of Indian Affairs staff. Secretary Udall is seated at the Vice President's left.

leadership and initiative in solving Indian problems. Indians must have a voice in making the plans and decisions in programs which are important to their daily life.

Within the last few months we have seen a new concept of community development—a concept based on self-help—work successfully among Indians. Many tribes have begun to administer activities which Federal agencies had long performed in their behalf:

—On the Crow Creek, Lower Brule, and Fort Berthold reservations in the Dakotas and on reservations in several other states, imaginative new work-experience programs, operated by Indians themselves, provide jobs for Indians once totally dependent on welfare.

—The Warm Springs Tribes of Oregon ran an extensive program to repair flood damage on their reservation.

—The Oglala Sioux of South Dakota and the Zunis of New Mexico are now contracting to provide law enforcement services for their communities.

—The Navajos—who this year celebrate the 100th anniversary of their peace treaty with the United States—furnish many community services normally provided by the Federal government, either through contract or with funds from their own Treasury.

Passive acceptance of Federal service is giving way to Indian involvement. More than ever before, Indian needs are being identified from the Indian viewpoint—as they should be.

This principle is the key to progress for Indians—just as it has been for other Americans. If we base our programs upon it, the day will come when the relationship between Indians and the Government will be one of full partnership—not dependency.

Education

The problems of Indian education are legion:

—Ten percent of American Indians over age 14 have had no schooling at all.

—Nearly 60 percent have less than an eighth grade education.

—Half of our Indian children do not finish high school today.

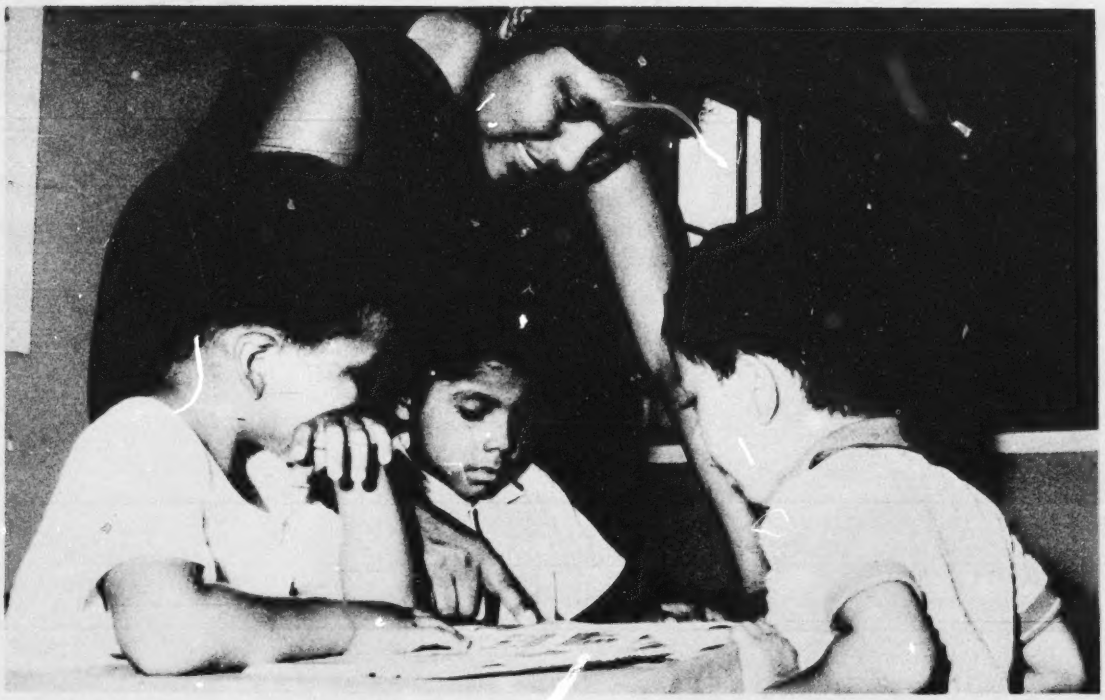
—Even those Indians attending school are plagued by language barriers, by isolation in remote areas, by lack of a tradition of academic achievement.

Standard schooling and vocational training will not be enough to overcome the educational difficulties of the Indians. More intensive and imaginative approaches are needed.

The legislation enacted in the past four years gives us the means to make the special effort now needed in Indian education: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Education Professions Development Act, the Vocational Education Act, and the Higher Education Act.

The challenge is to use this legislation creatively.

I have directed the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare:



"These schools will have the finest teachers. . . (Ft. Mohave, Ariz.)

—*To work together to make these programs responsive to the needs of Indians.*

—*To develop a concentrated effort in Indian education with State and local agencies.* This is critical if the two-thirds of Indian school children in non-Indian public schools are to get the special help they sorely need.

Pre-School Programs

In the past few years we as a Nation have come to recognize the irreplaceable importance of the earliest years in a child's life. Pre-school education and care—valuable for all children—are urgently needed for Indian children.

We must set a goal to enroll every four and five-year-old Indian child in a pre-school program by 1971.

For 1969, I am requesting funds to:

—Make the Head Start Program available to 10,000 Indian children.

—Establish, for the first time, kindergartens for 4,500 Indian youngsters next September.

To encourage Indian involvement in this educational process, I am asking the Secretary of the Interior to assure that each of these kindergartens employ local Indian teacher aides as well as trained teachers.

Federal Indian Schools

Since 1961, we have undertaken a substantial program to improve

the 245 Federal Indian schools, which are attended by over 50,000 children. That effort is now half completed. It will continue.

But good facilities are not enough.

I am asking the Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, to establish a model community school system for Indians. These schools will:

—Have the finest teachers, familiar with Indian history, culture and language.

—Feature an enriched curriculum, special guidance and counseling programs, modern instruction materials, and a sound program to teach English as a second language.

—Serve the local Indian population as a community center for activities ranging from adult education classes to social gatherings.

To reach this goal, I propose that the Congress appropriate $5.5 million to attract and hold talented and dedicated teachers at Indian schools and to provide 200 additional teachers and other professionals to enrich instruction, counseling and other programs.

To help make the Indian school a vital part of the Indian community, I am directing the Secretary of the Interior to establish Indian school boards for Federal Indian Schools. School board members—selected by their communities—will receive whatever training is necessary to enable them to carry out their responsibilities.

Higher Education

Indian youth must be given more opportunities to develop their talents fully and to pursue their ambitions free of arbitrary barriers to learning and employment. They must have a chance to become professionals: doctors, nurses, engineers, managers and teachers.

For the young Indian of today will eventually become the bridge between two cultures, two languages, and two ways of life.

Therefore, we must open wide the doors of career training and higher education to all Indian students who qualify.

To reach this goal:

—I am requesting $3 million in Fiscal 1969 for college scholarship grants, to include for the first time living allowances for Indian students and their families to help capable young Indians meet the costs of higher education.

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, right, discusses a point of the President's Message to Congress on American Indians with the Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey at the Department of the Interior.

"Encourage light industry on Indian reservations. . ." (Laguna, N. M.)

--I am asking the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to make a special and sustained effort to assure that our regular scholarship and loan programs are available to Indian high school graduates.

—I am asking the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity to establish a special Upward Bound program for Indian high school students.

Health and Medical Care

The health level of the American Indian is the lowest of any major population group in the United States:

—The infant mortality rate among Indians is 34.5 per 1,000 births—12 points above the National average.

—The incidence of tuberculosis among Indians and Alaska natives is about five times the National average.

—More than half of the Indians obtain water from contaminated or potentially dangerous sources, and use waste disposal facilities that are grossly inadequate.

—Viral infections, pneumonia, and malnutrition—all of which contribute to chronic ill health and mental retardation—are common among Indian children.

We have made progress. Since 1963:

—The infant death rate has declined 21 percent.

—Deaths from tuberculosis are down 29 percent.

—The number of outpatient visits to clinics and health centers rose 16 percent.

But much more remains to be done.

I propose that the Congress increase health programs for Indians by about ten percent, to $112 million in Fiscal 1969, with special emphasis on child health programs.

But if we are to solve Indian health problems, the Indian people themselves must improve their public health and family health practices. This will require a new effort to involve Indian families in a crusade for better health.

Recent experience demonstrates that Indians have been successful in working side by side with health professionals:

—They have organized tribal health committees to review Indian health problems and design programs for solving them.

—They have launched new programs in sanitation, mental health, alcoholism, and accident control.

—A cooperative Indian-government project to provide safe water and disposal systems for 44,000 Indians and Alaska native families has proved successful. For every Federal dollar spent, Indian Americans have contributed another 40 cents in labor, materials and actual funds.

I am directing the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to build a "community participation" component into every Federal health program for Indians which lends itself to this approach.

Essential to this effort will be a large, well-trained corps of community health aides drawn from the Indian population: nursing assistants, health record clerks, medical-social aides and nutrition workers. These community health aides can greatly assist professional health workers in bringing health services to Indian communities.

I recommend that the Congress appropriate funds to train and employ more than 600 new community Indian health aides in the Public Health Service.

These aides will serve nearly 200,000 Indians and Alaska natives in their home communities, teaching sound health practices to the Indian people in several critical fields: pre-natal health, child care, home sanitation and personal hygiene.

Our goal is first to narrow, then to close the wide breach between the health standards of Indians and other Americans. But before large investments in Federally-sponsored health services can pay lasting dividends, we must build a solid base of Indian community action for better health.

Jobs and Economic Development

The plight of the Indians gives grim testimony to the devastating effects of unemployment on the individual, the family, and the community:

—Nearly 40 percent of the labor force on Indian lands is chronically unemployed, compared with a national unemployment rate of 3.5 percent.

—Of the Indians who do work, a third are underemployed in temporary or seasonal jobs.

—Fifty percent of Indian families have cash incomes below $2,000

a year; 75 percent have incomes below $3,000.

With rare exception, Indian communities are so underdeveloped that there is little, if any, opportunity for significant social or economic progress.

Two percent of all the land in the United States is Indian land. Indian lands are about the size of all the New England States and a small slice of New York. But many of their resources—oil, gas, coal, uranium, timber, water—await development.

The economic ills of Indian areas can have a major impact upon neighboring regions as well. It is not only in the best interests of the Indians, but of the entire Nation, to expand Indian economic opportunity.

Jobs

Special employment programs have been established to help meet the needs of Indians. In 1967 alone, more than 10,000 men and women received training and other help to get jobs under the Indian Bureau's programs—double the number served four years ago. These programs:

—Provide all-expenses-paid training and placement for Indian adults.

—Develop projects in cooperation with private industry, in which families prepare together for the transition from welfare dependency to useful, productive work.

Left to right at the press briefing in the Department of the Interior on the President's Message to Congress: John Belindo, executive secretary of the National Congress of American Indians; Mrs. Georgia A. Robinson, Osage; Mrs. Elvina Greybear, Sioux; Mrs. Helen Mitchell, Quinalt; Robert L. Bennett, Commissioner of Indian Affairs; Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey; Sarah Ann Johnson, Miss Indian America XIV; Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall; and Wendell Chino, chairman, National Congress of American Indians.

To meet the increasing demand, I propose that the Indian Vocational Training Program be expanded to the full authorization of $25 million in Fiscal 1969—nearly double the funds appropriated last year.

In the State of the Union message, I proposed a 25 percent increase—to $2.1 billion—in our manpower training programs for Fiscal 1969.

As a part of this effort, I have asked the Secretary of Labor to expand the Concentrated Employment Program to include Indian reservations.

Area Development

The economic development of potentially productive Indian areas suffers from a lack of base capital to permit Indians to take advantage of sound investment op-

portunities and to attract private capital.

The Indian Resources Development Act, now pending before Congress, contains provisions to spark this kind of investment.

The central feature of this Act is an authorization of $500 million for an Indian loan guaranty and insurance fund and for a direct loan revolving fund.

These funds would:

—Provide the foundation for the economic development of Indian lands.

—Encourage light industry to locate on or near Indian reservations.

—Permit better development of natural resources.

—Encourage development of the tourist potential on many reservations.

The Indian Resources Development Act would also permit the issuance of Federal corporate charters to Indian tribes or groups of Indians. This charter gives them the means to compete with other communities in attracting outside investment.

I urge the Congress to enact this program for the economic development of Indian resources.

Roads for Economic Development

Without an adequate system of roads to link Indian areas with the rest of our Nation, community and economic development, Indian self-help programs, and even education cannot go forward as rapidly as they should.

Large areas inhabited by Indians are virtually inaccessible. For example, on the vast Navajo-Hopi area there are only 30 percent as many miles of surfaced roads per 1,000 square miles as in rural areas of Arizona and New Mexico.

The woefully inadequate road systems in Indian areas must be improved. Good roads are desperately needed for economic development. And good roads may someday enable the Indian people to keep their young children at home, instead of having to send them to far-away boarding schools.

I propose an amendment to the Federal Highway Act increasing the authorization for Indian road construction to $30 million annually beginning in Fiscal 1970.

Essential Community Services

Housing

Most Indian housing is far worse than the housing in many slums of our large cities.

To begin our attack on the backlog of substandard housing:

—I have asked the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to increase Indian home construction by an additional 1,000 units this coming year, for a total of 2,500 annually.

—I propose that the Congress double the Fiscal 1968 appropriations—to $6 million in 1969—for a broad home improvement program.

These steps are a strong start toward improving living conditions among Indians, while we deal with the underlying causes of inadequate

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housing. But the present housing law is too rigid to meet the special needs and conditions of our Indian population.

I am therefore submitting legislation to open the door for more Indians to receive low-cost housing aid, and to extend the loan programs of the Farmers Home Administration to tribal lands.

In addition:

—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development will review construction standards for Indian homes to ensure flexibility in design and construction of Indian housing.

—The Secretaries of the Interior and Housing and Urban Development will explore new low-cost techniques of construction suitable to a stepped-up Indian housing program.

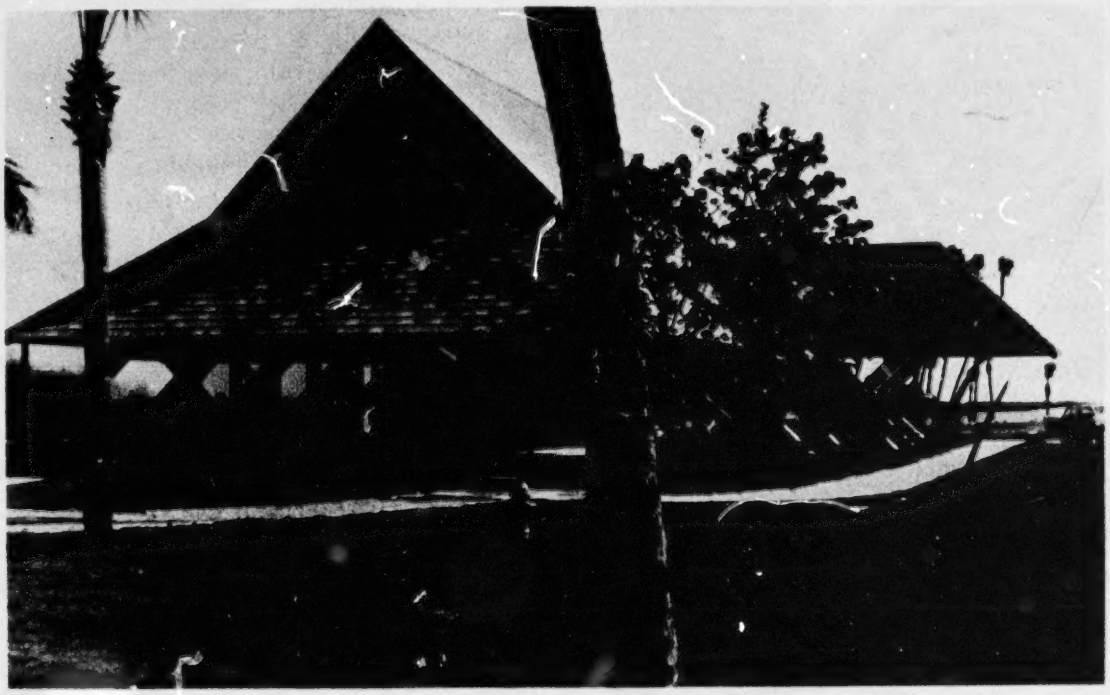
Community Action

Programs under the Economic Opportunity Act have improved morale in Indian communities. They have given tribes new opportunities to plan and carry out social and economic projects. Community action programs, particularly Head Start, deserve strong support.

I am asking the Congress to provide $22.7 million in Fiscal 1969 for these important efforts.

Water and Sewer Projects

Shorter life expectancy and higher infant mortality among Indians are caused in large part by unsanitary water supplies and contamination



"Encourage development of tourist potential. . ." (Miccosukee, Fla. restaurant)

from unsafe waste disposal.

The Federal Government has authority to join with individual Indians to construct these facilities on Indian lands. The government contributes the capital. The Indian contributes the labor.

To step up this program, I recommend that the Congress increase appropriations for safe water and sanitary waste disposal facilities by 30 percent—from $10 million in Fiscal 1968 to $13 million in Fiscal 1969.

Civil Rights

A Bill of Rights for Indians

In 1934, Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act, which laid the groundwork for democratic self-government on Indian reservations. This Act was the forerunner of the tribal constitutions—the charters of democratic practice among the Indians.

Yet few tribal constitutions include a bill of rights for individual Indians. The basic individual rights which most Americans enjoy in relation to their government—enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the United States—are not safeguarded for Indians in relation to their tribes.

A new Indian Rights Bill is pending in the Congress. It would protect the individual rights of Indians in such matters as freedom of speech and religion, unreasonable search and seizure, a speedy and fair trial, and the right to habeas corpus. The Senate passed an Indian Bill of Rights last year. *I urge the Congress to complete action on that Bill of Rights in the current session.*

In addition to providing new protection for members of tribes, this bill would remedy another matter of grave concern to the American Indian.

Fifteen years ago, the Congress gave to the States authority to extend their criminal and civil jurisdictions to include Indian reservations—where jurisdiction previously was in the hands of the Indians themselves.

Fairness and basic democratic principles require that Indians on the affected lands have a voice in deciding whether a State will assume legal jurisdiction on their land.

I urge the Congress to enact legislation that would provide for tribal consent before such extensions of jurisdiction take place.

Off-Reservation Indians

Most of us think of Indians as living in their own communities—geographically, socially and psychologically remote from the main current of American life.

Until World War II, this was an accurate picture of most Indian people. Since that time, however, the number of Indians living in towns and urban centers has increased to 200,000.

Indians in the towns and cities of our country have urgent needs for education, health, welfare, and rehabilitation services, which are far greater than that of the general population.

These needs can be met through Federal, State and local programs. *I am asking the new Council on Indian Opportunity to study this prob-*

lem and report to me promptly on actions to meet the needs of Indians in our cities and towns.

Alaskan Native Claims

The land rights of the native people of Alaska—the Aleuts, Eskimos and Indians—have never been fully or fairly defined.

Eighty-four years ago, Congress protected the Alaska natives in the use and occupancy of their lands. But then, and again when Alaska was given statehood, Congress reserved to itself the power of final decision on ultimate title.

It remains our unfinished task to state in law the terms and conditions of settlement, so that uncertainty can be ended for the native people of Alaska.

Legislation is now pending to resolve this issue. I recommend prompt action on legislation to:

—Give the native people of Alaska title to the lands they occupy and need to sustain their villages.

—Give them rights to use additional lands and water for hunting, trapping and fishing to maintain their traditional way of life, if they so choose.

—Award them compensation commensurate with the value of any lands taken from them.

The First Americans

The program I propose seeks to promote Indian development by improving health and education, encouraging long-term economic growth, and strengthening community institutions.

Underlying this program is the assumption that the Federal government can best be a responsible partner in Indian progress by treating the Indian himself as a full citizen, responsible for the pace and direction of his development.

But there can be no question that the government and the people of the United States have a responsibility to the Indians.

In our efforts to meet that responsibility, we must pledge to respect fully the dignity and the uniqueness of the Indian citizen.

That means partnership—not paternalism.

We must affirm the right of the first Americans to remain Indians while exercising their rights as Americans.

We must affirm their right to freedom of choice and self-determination.

We must seek new ways to provide Federal assistance to Indians—with new emphasis on Indian self-help and with respect for Indian culture.

And we must assure the Indian people that it is our desire and intention that the special relationship between the Indian and his government grow and flourish.

For, the first among us must not be last.

I urge the Congress to affirm this policy and to enact this program.

Lyndon B. Johnson

The White House
March 6, 1968